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Citation for published version:

Hancock, A 2012, Inclusive practices for pupils with English as an additional language. in R Arshad, T Wrigley & L Pratt (eds), *Social Justice Re-Examined: Dilemmas and Solutions for the Classroom Teacher*. Trentham Books Ltd, Stoke-on-Trent, pp. 97-113.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Social Justice Re-Examined

Publisher Rights Statement:

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Social Justice Re-Examined: Dilemmas and Solutions for the Classroom Teacher. ed. / Rowena Arshad; Terry Wrigley ; Lynne Pratt. Stoke-on-Trent : Trentham Books Ltd, 2012. p. 97-113.
Research output: Chapter in

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Inclusive practices for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Introduction: multilingual classrooms

The need for teachers to take account of the diverse nature of their schools continues to grow as a range of factors have seen the scale and scope of migration transform the linguistic makeup of classrooms in the United Kingdom (UK) in the last decade. The linguistic landscape of the UK has traditionally been characterised by nearly half a century by large settled communities of citizens originally from commonwealth countries such as Pakistan, India, the Caribbean, Bangladesh and Hong Kong. More recently, the expansion of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 brought a substantial, and largely unexpected, arrival of migrant workers seeking employment, especially from Poland, who contribute to the country's economy and whose children have added to the richness of multilingual classrooms.

Furthermore, political and economic instability across the globe have seen the arrival of significant numbers of refugee and asylum-seeking families. Most of these asylum seeker families originate from a range of countries experiencing conflict (such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Zimbabwe) or persecution (such as the Roma in eastern Europe and Kurds in Iraq). Many of these pupils (including unaccompanied young people) may have additional challenges such as low literacy levels due to gaps in formal schooling in their own country or in countries where they lived in transit. These pupils may also require pastoral care for emotional and psychological issues as a result of experiencing trauma and suffering from distress (Rutter, 2003).

Another distinct group are 'elite' bilingual pupils whose parents travel for business, academic and diplomatic reasons. These families may have short-term residence and the children's acquisition of English is frequently viewed as an advantageous educational resource in an increasingly globalised world.

All the above forms of global migration are characterised by the notion of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007). Such a condition is distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new and scattered, multiple-origin, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified migrants. As a result of this changing linguistic diversity teachers are expected to encounter multilingual classrooms at some point in their careers and when they do, they need to feel confident and equipped with the knowledge and skills to address the needs – and talents – of EAL learners.

This chapter does not to give details of the strategies to support additional language acquisition, as this has been covered comprehensively elsewhere, but it does refer readers to the key sources of guidance. The primary aim of the chapter is to provide a brief sketch of some of the main theoretical understandings underpinning the area of EAL and to highlight some of the challenges facing teachers. At the same time it also offers guidance to monolingual teachers and student teachers on inclusive practices, as part of a wider social justice agenda for schools in order to promote children’s self-esteem, participation and achievement. The text is interspersed with short vignettes drawing on authentic school and classroom events to highlight potential tensions, followed by reflective questions to stimulate critical discussion and debate.

Asking questions and gathering information

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004 introduced a new framework in Scotland to provide for children and young people who require additional support with their learning and for the first time includes those with EAL. The accompanying *Code of Practice* (2005) contains the following advice:

A need for additional support does not imply that a child or young person lacks abilities and skills. For example, bilingual children or young people, whose first language is not English, may already have a fully developed home language and a wide range of achievements, skills and abilities. Any lack of English should be addressed within a learning and teaching programme which takes full account of the individual’s abilities and learning needs.

(Scottish Executive, 2005: 20)

This discourse clearly acknowledges the ‘linguistic capital’ bilingual pupils bring to school which can act as a foundation for teaching and learning. Although the legislation

has rightly raised the profile of learners of EAL in the Scottish context it is important to stress the obvious but crucial point that not all learners of EAL are homogeneous with the same needs and experiences. This ranges from new arrivals to a pool of second or third generation British-born learners, many of whom speak English to their siblings at home but still may require language support to develop their full academic potential. It is important to understand the heterogeneous nature of minority ethnic communities in the UK in terms of migration histories, sociolinguistic profiles, beliefs and attitudes and how these lived experiences and changing proficiencies, allegiances and affiliations to different languages and literacies are inextricably linked with dynamic and complex identities (see Hancock, 2006).

It is therefore not enough to argue that policies must meet the needs of EAL learners but information must be detailed enough to pick up the uniqueness between and within minority groups and differentiate support for individuals and families accordingly. When a school encounters a new arrival with EAL background information should be acquired at enrolment with the help of a trained interpreter. (For guided questions and procedures on initial assessment see Hall, 2001 and Howard, 2008.) However, teachers also need to engage with EAL learners and this implies taking a listening stance and viewing classrooms as places where not only children learn but where teachers can also gain valuable knowledge about individual children's linguistic and cultural capital. How teachers can apply these intercultural insights to their own teaching practice is the focus of another section in this chapter.

The concept of intersectionality is helpful here to gain understandings about how race and ethnicity affects children and young people's experiences and educational outcomes. That is, there is a need to consider other aspects of the learners' identity such as gender, place of birth, age of migration, educational background and religion/cultural heritage. Moreover, attention also needs to be paid to factors impacting on childhood circumstances such as family structure, family income, geographical location, health, parents' educational background and parental aspirations for their children (see Emejulu, 2008).

The policy context of language in education

The vast majority of families belonging to linguistic minorities are keen to maintain the

language of the home as it is integral to their identity, home literacy practices and cultural heritage. However, within the current policy context, these young people are faced with two competing languages, one of which is the language of education and power. There is a strong incentive, therefore, for those in the language minority to learn the language of power in order to participate fully in society. In this situation, they risk losing their home language, which is often perceived by wider society as a low status language. In fact, according to García (2009), the language shift will be complete within three generations, and the third generation will lose the ability to communicate in what was the family's home language. That is to say the educational outcome is monolingualism, or at best, limited bilingualism, where learners are forced to assimilate into the majority language and culture as soon as possible.

The reality of this policy context means linguistic minority pupils face a number of challenges. First, they are 'submerged' into a new language in mainstream classrooms and face the dual task of learning English while attempting to access the curriculum through this new or developing language. Second, these pupils frequently do not have sufficient competency in English to interact with native speaking peers who provide important friendships and good models of the target language. Third, they must quickly adapt to a learning and teaching environment which may be culturally unfamiliar. Gaine (2005) also asserts that these pupils experience racism on a regular basis, which impacts on their self-esteem and learning. (For information about dealing with racist incidents see Coles, 2008, and chapter (?) in this book.)

Meanwhile, bilingual pupils are also competing with a moving target- as their monolingual peers continue to make progress academically (Thomas and Collier, 2002). Anecdotal evidence suggests that pupils with EAL are frequently assigned to low ability groups and given academically inappropriate work; moreover, their poor performance on assessments designed for monolingual native speakers of English confirm their teachers' low expectations. The Educational Inspectorate in Scotland has recognised the growing need for schools to take more responsibility for evaluating their educational provision for bilingual learners and guidelines have been produced outlining effective ways to self-monitor this (HMIe, 2006). A further document (HMIe, 2009) seeks to inform schools on good practice and areas for development when working with recently arrived children and families

Language sensitive pedagogy

For language support to be effective it cannot be taught using the traditional methodology for modern foreign languages, namely, through a discrete set of skills in a prescriptive step-by-step fashion, using textbooks and employing a progression of discrete grammar-translation rules. The practice of placing some new arrivals into separate language classes has also been condemned, and such segregated provision is viewed as a form of institutionalised racism. The argument put forward here is that withdrawing children and young people from mainstream classrooms results in stigmatization and reinforces the notion of 'deficit' and 'difference'. This provision also restricts learners' contact with English speaking peers and access to the full curriculum available in mainstream classrooms.

The preferred support model involves full inclusion of learners in mainstream classrooms from the start, with an accompanying strategic whole-school approach which views inclusion as the responsibility of all prospective and practicing teachers. Organisations like NALDIC (<http://www.naldic.org.uk>) take the position that effective language support incorporates the interwoven elements of social, cultural, cognitive and linguistic development. The challenge for teachers is how to promote language-sensitive teaching so that the learner develops important relationships with English-speaking peers and is stretched both linguistically and cognitively at their appropriate level. This can be achieved by class and subject teachers having high expectations and creating opportunities for learners to activate prior knowledge. It involves learning both English and curriculum content simultaneously, through collaborative learning tasks using knowledge frameworks, graphic organisers and key visuals. (For detailed explanations of these methodologies see Brent Language Service, 1999, and Mohan, 2001.)

The argument here is that by using scaffolding strategies and adjusting classroom pedagogies in this way, teachers can make learning more accessible, with benefits to bilingual and monolingual pupils alike. There is no space here for details of planning for language and content teaching, but for advice on supporting new arrivals see Gibbons, 1993, and DfES, 2007. For guidance on appropriate pedagogy see Smyth, 2003; Learning Teaching Scotland, 2005, 2006; Leung and Creese, 2010. Examples

of subject specific pedagogies for teaching EAL pupils can be found in *Access and Engagement in Design and Technology* (DfES, 2002a) and *Access and Engagement in Physical Education* (DfES, 2002b).

Roxanna is nine years of age and recently arrived from Iran. She speaks Farsi to her sister and parents at home. The class teacher believes Roxanna needs support with her English reading and she has organized for Roxanna to work through an individualised phonics programme on the computer in the corner of the classroom while the rest of the class are engaged in collaborative group activities based on the class topic looking at the language and layout of adverts from magazines. It soon becomes apparent that Roxana spends a lot of the time turning away from the computer to watch what her peers are doing.

How can class teachers ensure that new arrivals are included in mainstream activities whilst having appropriate support tailored to their individual needs?

How can opportunities be created for Roxanna to be involved in the topic work of the class to ensure both language and cognitive development?

Language Proficiency- how long does it take?

The stages of additional language acquisition are well documented, with a continuum including; New to English (including an initial ‘Silent period’), Early Acquisition, Developing Competence, Competent and Fluent. For support strategies at each of these stages see <http://www.ealedinburgh.org.uk/>. Although these five phases provide a useful sequential framework it is worth remembering that the ‘average’ EAL pupil does not exist as they enter school at different ages, from a variety of backgrounds and with different personalities. That said, it is important to distinguish between language used for social purposes (or the language of the playground) as opposed to the academic language required to access the curriculum. Cummins (2000) believes that it takes learners of EAL about eighteen months to two years to acquire Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) but that it may take five to seven years or longer for some EAL learners to achieve Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

Assessing EAL learners based purely on their apparent conversational fluency may mask their need for continued support with language and literacy in classrooms where the language used is more abstract and demanding. In the period after pupils develop

everyday conversational and transaction English but before they acquire academic English, there is a danger that their teachers may assume that they are falling progressively behind their monolingual peers, and the pupils may lose confidence and motivation because of lack of success. Furthermore, the poor academic performance of pupils who appear comfortable in English may give teachers the sense that the child is not trying or has a learning difficulty. As mentioned above, the challenge for teachers is to provide appropriate modified activities that are cognitively demanding and linguistically accessible without being over-simplified. (Refer to Cooke, 2005, for examples of differentiated tasks.)

Akiko is a fifteen year-old new arrival from Japan. Her subject teachers are called to a meeting by the Senior Management Team to discuss her timetable and induction. During the meeting, Anne the Physical Education teacher asks if there is any EAL support available for the PE lessons. The answer is that the EAL teacher has to prioritise and will only be supporting Akiko in History and Biology. Anne is concerned that Akiko's participation in PE may have health and safety implications as Akiko will not be able to understand instructions during the practical lessons. Furthermore, the class are doing a Unit on exercise and the cardio-vascular system and Anne feels that the language contained in the Unit will be too difficult for Akiko.

What provision and support should be made for new arrivals in and outside PE lessons?

How can teachers find time to consult and plan alongside EAL support teachers?

How do subject teachers ensure language sensitive teaching and learning takes place in their curriculum area?

Translanguaging

More often than not, the education system treats the two languages of the bilingual pupil separately and the monolingual teacher focuses on the problems that the lack of English causes. There is often a misconception that bilingualism confuses pupils and that parents using languages other than English at home delay their acquisition of the language of schooling. By contrast, Cummins (2000) prefers to see the languages as interwoven and uses the *iceberg* analogy to illustrate this point. The two peaks of the iceberg above the waterline represent the distinct surface features of the different languages but underneath the water the two languages share a common underlying proficiency which allows concepts and skills to be transferred from one language to another. For example a Polish child who has already received an education in Poland will already have developed literacy skills such as decoding an alphabetic script. They

will not have to learn to read again but they will merely have to adapt their decoding skills to the phonology or sound system of English when reading. However, they will require additional support with the comprehension of English texts. For example, pupils will not have the depth of vocabulary to make sense of the new words they are reading or the cultural knowledge to gain meaning from some of the stories to which they are exposed to in school.

Therefore teachers need to look beyond the monolingual classroom context and look for creative opportunities that allow EAL pupils to draw on all their linguistic resources for learning purposes across the curriculum. García (2009) calls this 'translanguaging' where learners are active agents and can use the languages at their disposal on their own terms. 'Translanguaging' views code-switching as a natural phenomenon in multilingual settings and an integral part of pupils' identity formation. It is also evident that their flexible bilingualism performs an important function as a tool for thinking and literacy learning (Hancock, 2011). That is, the teacher taps into the children's pre-existing cultural and linguistic knowledge and draws on the learners' bilingual skills to support the discussion of concepts and skills.

Below are some illustrations of how teachers can make choices and transform classroom practices by drawing on the home language:

- Use bilingual staff
- Invite parents to read stories in their home language
- Invite parents to support children's learning through first language
- Allow pupils to use dual language dictionaries
- Build up dual language book library and audio tapes
- Paired reading of bilingual books with buddy who shares the same language
- Encourage children to write and publish bilingual/multilingual texts
- Share resources and develop teaching and learning through video conferencing
- Make displays incorporating a variety of languages and scripts
- Celebrate children's accomplishments gained at complementary schools and acknowledging their biliteracy talents within individual learning portfolios
- Learn key words in child's home language

All these actions challenge the dominant educational discourse that claims that developing a child's first language hinders the learning of English language. Teachers can also gain knowledge of the cultural and linguistic capital which bilingual pupils bring to school. Changing classroom pedagogies by using the strategies cited above will not only raise the awareness of language diversity among the monolingual school population but also have a positive impact on intercultural sensitivity and language awareness. Furthermore, these types of initiative draw on the personalised learning agenda in which children have an entitlement to receive support and challenge, tailored to their individual needs, interests and abilities.

In the staffroom Rachael, a class teacher, is talking to Juliet another member of staff. She mentions that she observed Martyn and Frideryk whispering in Polish to each other during their number work. Rachael says, 'I told them you can't speak Polish here. They can't speak English properly and they really need to practice it'.

If you were the other member of staff listening to Rachel how would you respond to her view?

How can an ethos be created so pupils feel comfortable using their first language in the classroom without this creating a barrier to other members of the class?

Authors such as Baker (2011) have refuted earlier claims about language confusion in bilinguals and point to the various intellectual and literate advantages to the individual when conditions are favourable to bilingual development. Enhanced vocabularies and wider phonological systems give bilingual children metalinguistic awareness. That is, the ability to talk about language and how it works and a facility for learning further languages. Additionally, the experience of learning two languages gives bilingual pupils well-developed problem-solving skills and creativity abilities and a strong potential for cross-cultural empathy.

Hakim is fourteen-years-old and has just arrived from Malaysia. He will be in your school for a year whilst his mother undertakes an MSc programme at the local University. The Depute Head teacher, who has responsibility for timetabling, has arranged for Hakim to be withdrawn from modern languages, in order to have individual tuition to develop his English language skills. This support will be provided by the Additional Support Needs (ASN) teacher in the Support for Learning base. The DHT says Hakim needs to concentrate on learning English and introducing another language through English will only confuse him. When asked by the ASN teacher about his new school Hakim says he would like to learn French as he enjoys learning languages. The teacher discovers Hakim can converse in English because it

is a compulsory subject at primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. As a Muslim he regularly reads the Qu'ran in Arabic. In addition, Malaysia has a large Chinese population and Hakim knows some Cantonese because of his Chinese friends at school.

What might be done so that Hakim has the opportunity to learn French and develop his English?

How do you know what knowledge and experiences the pupils with EAL bring to your school?

The attitudes towards languages in society are frequently determined by shifting ideologies mediated through socio-economic considerations and politics rather than a concern for social justice and the educational enrichment of bilingualism. Suddenly a language which has been discounted and neglected by the school system as a vernacular of a cultural minority takes on high economic status. For example, China's re-emerging position of strength within global economics and trading systems has produced demands, within both business and political circles, for Chinese to be taught in schools to foster economic cooperation with China. This is not unlike the promotion of Japanese in a few British schools in the 1990s to support commercial activity with Japan. However, it is disappointing if bilingualism is promoted only in such circumstances, rather than viewing it as an asset in itself, within wider social contexts.

There are presently very few opportunities available within mainstream schools for speakers of minority languages to develop their first language skills. This policy context and coercive relations of power, means countries such as Scotland are currently not in a favourable position to capitalise on its linguistic resources. Teachers may also encounter a number of contradictory discourses currently being played out within political and educational forums. On the one hand, there have been moves towards embedding citizenship education within the mainstream curriculum with an emphasis on informed decision making, and taking thoughtful and responsible action. This acts as a catalyst to encourage children and young people to actively engage in issues of social justice and intercultural encounters at a local, national and global level.

On the other hand, there has been a political rebranding of the notion of citizenship, in response to the challenges presented through increasing levels of diversity. The UK Government's prioritisation of a community cohesion agenda aims at countering the perceived challenges that migrants pose to a cohesive 'national cultural identity' where differences are seen as dangerous. The result is the enforcement of English language and citizenship testing for new migrants seeking to gain right of residence. This construct of national identity as a political ideology sends powerful messages to educationalists, where citizenship requirements are made conditional on the proficiency of the 'official' language. This policy of using language to legitimise or de-legitimise people only reinforces assimilationist and monolingual agendas rather than valuing linguistic pluralism.

Partnerships with parents

Parents have tremendous knowledge of their own children, and research shows that minority parents have a deep-seated interest in their children's education. This should be viewed as an important resource. It is important for schools to engage with parents, respecting them as equal partners. Teachers need to listen to parents and for teachers and appreciate the home background and daily lives of the diverse community the school serves. The primary focus should be on involving schools with parents, rather than merely demanding that parents engage with school.

There are inherent dangers in making assumptions about parents' educational beliefs based on their cultural background. Teachers need to recognise that cultures are dynamic and they should strive to avoid seeing minority parents as a homogeneous group. Parental partnership is a process where both parents and teachers work towards an achievable sharing of power and responsibility and consultation with parents should be conducted in the spirit of respectful dialogue and learning from each other. In other words, effective dialogue encourages the interchange of ideas and opinions but this type of communication also requires the use of trained and professional interpreters if parents have limited English. No two families are the same but Moskal's (2010) research with the Polish community in Scotland highlighted some of the common issues and barriers minority families experience that hinders them from being fully involved in their children's schooling.

Ca Mei is a Cantonese-speaking five-year-old girl. A meeting has been arranged through an interpreter with her parents in the morning because the parents work unsocial hours in the family run take-away. Maureen, the class teacher is concerned that Ca Mei doesn't speak much in class and is therefore missing out on opportunities to interact with her peers and form friendships.

What questions would you like to ask Chun Wah's parents whilst sharing your knowledge of Chun Wah in an open and collaborative manner?

How can you develop your skills in active listening and working in partnership with interpreters?

When communicating with minority parents how can you ensure that your own beliefs and values are not conveyed to the parents, either consciously or subconsciously.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn attention to the challenges teachers face in increasingly diverse classrooms but also the contribution practitioners can make in supporting pupils with EAL to be effective learners. It has been shown that by building on the full range of languages that learners of EAL have at their disposal conditions can be created for both language and academic development. Furthermore, it has been argued that by adjusting classroom pedagogies in this way it will benefit not only learners of EAL but all learners. In doing so, it is hoped that student teachers and teachers will feel more confident and better equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond positively to the reality of multilingual classrooms.

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